

THE EVENING STAR.
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CROSBY S. NOYES, Editor

THE STAR has a regular and permanent Family Circulation much more than the combined circulation of all the other Washington dailies. As a News and Advertising Medium it has no competitor.

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The District's Big Floating Debt.

The urgent necessity of securing from Congress an enactment which will put the District's finances on a business-like basis and permit proper current maintenance as well as a consecutive and rapid progress in the construction of large permanent works receives a further demonstration from the action of the Secretary of the Treasury in forwarding the Commissioners' estimates with a cut of \$320,422.15. In order, as he says, to bring them within the estimated revenues. If the Secretary's function in this proceeding is to be at all significant, it is apparent that under the present system the capital cannot receive a sufficient appropriation to enable it to conduct its municipal government in proper style and at the same time to equip itself with the costly necessities of a great federal center. If, on the other hand, the Secretary's action is of no importance, and if Congress intends to proceed without reference to his recommendations, some arrangement should be reached whereby the Commissioners may lay their estimates before Congress without the temporary handicap of a make-believe cut.

Nevertheless, the Secretary's action is suggestive of the need of an immediate readjustment of the fiscal relations of the District and the general government. The local tax revenues are large enough to run the District on a proper scale of liberal provision and to leave a generous margin for permanent improvements. If this margin were regarded as a sinking fund, to liquidate a betterment debt on a twenty-year basis, there would be no difficulty in running the District on a proper scale of liberal provision, and none of the present trouble in the annual allotment of funds from trying to make one million do the work of one and a half.

Of course, the District can go on from year to year as it has gone for the past few seasons, running into debt to the general government as Congress permits it to spend more money than it possesses and trusting to some equitable adjustment of the debt on a long-term basis when the logic of the case shall have been fully borne in upon the congressional mind. But there is no satisfaction in the reflection that there is piling up at a rather appalling rate a floating indebtedness which may at any time be foreclosed on unjust terms. There is no assurance in the least understanding that Congress will eventually do the right thing in the matter of providing for the repayment of these federal advances. And meanwhile the obligation to carry these advances on the books as short-term liens upon the local tax revenues is crippling the District. It is causing an annual curtailment of the allotments for current maintenance. It is causing members of the committee to postpone action on urgently needed public works, such as the high-pressure fire service. It is keeping the local taxpayers in constant apprehension lest they may ultimately be forced to bear the entire burden of this great outlay for permanent works now in process of accumulation.

Russia's Quandary.

Sinister reports come from Manchuria regarding the mutinous tendencies of the Russian soldiers there encamped awaiting return to their homes. They have been held now several months longer than any military necessity required. They are demanding prompt shipment back to Russia and the government is doing practically nothing to accommodate them. The suggestion arises that the authorities at St. Petersburg are between the devil and the deep sea in this matter. If the soldiers are brought back now they are likely to swell the chorus for reforms. The tales of their hardships and losses in Manchuria may add to the passionate indignation of the people against the government. Their military experience, however humbling in general terms, will make them much more formidable agitators than are the untrained, ill-disciplined mobs now surging through the streets of several cities.

Yet if these men are not brought back soon it is probable that they will break through their bonds and rise in a revolt which will shock the world. Recent dispatches have indicated that Gen. L'nevitch is facing the most desperate danger of his career, and is exhausting his resources to induce the government to secure the necessary transports for the shipment of the soldiers back to Russia by sea. There is a scarcity of vessels and the rates have been advanced until it is certain that if the army is brought back by water the cost to the government will be tremendous. The Russian treasury is in no condition to stand many such heavy strains, but it is very important that if the soldiers are shipped out of Manchuria soon to avoid mutiny, they be sent by the longest possible route to prevent their arrival during the extreme stage of the political crisis.

Secretary Root's suggestion that the salary list for diplomatic employees be revised has caused some curiosity among department employees as to whether Uncle Sam's workers abroad will be required to stick to their desks till 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Bryan's approval of the President's message can be taken for granted. There was no need of his paying cable tolls to ascertain its contents or send back comment.

The New York Election Contest.

The fight for a full recount of the ballots cast in the recent mayoralty election in New York has reached an interesting crisis. Yesterday the appellate division of the Supreme Court rendered an opinion on Mr. Hearst's application for reopening of all the boxes and the cancelling of all defective votes found in them. The court expressed itself as believing that the principle of reopening and recounting is unsound, but said that it was compelled by the precedents to grant the petition, permitting the McClellan side to carry the case to the state court of appeals, which is to hear arguments next Monday.

That will be an occasion of the keenest interest to both lawyers and politicians. Alton B. Parker is one of McClellan's counsel, and will probably appear to conduct the appeal. He will, in that event, be faced with the embarrassing necessity of asking the court of which he was formerly chief justice to reverse a decision rendered by that court while he was its presiding member, he having been indeed the author of the decision.

In expressing his dissent from the principle of a recount, the court in the decision just rendered said:

rate scheme worked out by degrees by successive legislatures to secure a prompt and simultaneous count and declaration of the result on election night. It will substitute therefor by decision of the court a protracted judicial canvass of the votes in every election district of the state. The resulting delay, uncertainty and public anxiety can readily be foreseen."

This view is based apparently upon the sole ground that a recount is preferable to accuracy. It is better to announce the result speedily than to make sure of being right. It must be believed that even in these rushing days, when the public is impatient of all delays, there will be an emphatic dissent from this dictum by the intelligent classes of all shades of political opinion. To accept it and put it into practice would be to put a premium upon roguery at the polls, upon collusion between inspectors, upon all forms of venality in the vitally important function of electing public officers.

Enough has been disclosed already in the present contest to prove beyond doubt that the New York election system is seriously unreliable. In four ballot boxes out of five mistakes in counting were found. If the average should be maintained throughout, to completely overturn the showing of the returns. That of itself should cause the entire public to lose faith in the election methods and should convince any court that even if there were no precedents the duty of the judges is to afford every opportunity for a correct and honest ascertainment of the popular will.

Which is the greater evil, to make certain and in making certain to delay slightly the announcement of the result, or to make haste and in making haste to cover up frauds and errors which may have nullified the verdict?

Porto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippines

Our outlying possessions have every reason to be pleased with the message. The President shows thorough sympathy with all of them, and recommends policies for each which its people earnestly wish to see adopted. To the Porto Ricans he would give American citizenship; and that is something they have long desired. He would fortify Hawaii, and give the United States consideration in the acquisition of the islands. Both recommendations should prevail, and if they do Congress will have contributed to the wellbeing of everybody in interest.

The Philippine question is dealt with at some length. Present conditions, progress under great disadvantages, the needs of the hour and of the future, the spirit of the people as manifested toward both business and educational interests, are set forth in terms which show that the President knows his subject and has full faith in our ability to accomplish for the Philippines what is required of us. The necessity of keeping out Chinese laborers is recognized, and the policy of giving the Philippines an improved market in this country by the lowering of tariff duties on their chief staples, sugar and tobacco, is urged for immediate enactment into law.

Congress, indeed, has now all the light on this question necessary to wise and just action. The Taft party, with the Secretary of War at the head and directing the investigation, saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears much of the greatest value bearing on the national duty toward the islands, and this will be of service when the debate begins. Except in isolated spots in New York and New England, where the winters are long and severe, and topics for discussion are generally seized without regard to their interest or relevancy, the people have advanced beyond the babble about imperialism, and are concerned now only with the concrete and the practical. The republic is not tottering to its fall because of the taking over of the archipelago, and all we have to do is to take good care of the country and its backward inhabitants.

Another point of interest and assurance is that Governor Wright has returned for a visit home, and will be in Washington soon to confer with the President and Secretary Taft. Should Congress need further light on any disputed or difficult point he will be a source at hand of all necessary information.

Receiving a Korean Diplomat.

Min Yung Tahan, an accomplished Korean diplomat, landed in New York yesterday from Paris, where he had been stationed, and was met down the bay by a squad of newspaper reporters, who received him through a spokesman in this spirit and in something of these terms: "Your brother in Korea has committed suicide. We understand that the customs of your country require you to follow his example. Will you do it right away? This is probably the best place in the country for the carrying out of such a purpose. You would be assured of a great send-off. The best descriptive writers on the local press would be assigned to the job. You ought to comply with Korean customs, which are not abrogated by the claims of Korean nationality. Don't delay until you reach the provinces. Take our advice and seize the psychological moment. A few days more or less as this sad world goes are of small moment. Look to the dramatic features of your exit, and shuffle off where the limelight is best worked and is strongest. Give us a trial, and you'll never regret it."

If this is Mr. Min's first visit to America he is not likely to forget the extreme delicacy of his reception, though let us hope that he will not appraise the whole country by it.

It is safe to say that the interviewer who reported Sarah Bernhardt as saying that Canada has no taste or culture misquoted her. Mme. Bernhardt has been in the farewell tour business too long not to know the importance of saying pretty things to the people upon whom she depends for patronage.

The statesman who introduces a bill to prevent corporations from contributing to campaign funds must feel exceptionally sure of his standing with the masses in his district.

Some of the people who want to try a paternal government for awhile insist that the trusts are behaving toward the public too much like the proverbial stepfather.

A discontinuation of railway passes will be a gentle hint that a number of people who are not shippers have occasionally received the equivalent of a rebate.

Peary is safe in winter quarters and is probably not worrying as much as some of the people whose heat supply is regulated by the discretion of the janitor.

Smoke. The President's reference to the local smoke question in his annual message requires further consideration. It should be examined in its full terms:

"The law forbidding the emission of dense black smoke or gray smoke in the city of Washington has been sustained by the courts. Something has been accomplished under it, but much remains to be done if we would preserve the capital city from defacement by the smoke nuisance. Repeated prosecutions under the law have not had the desired effect. I recommend that it be made more stringent by increasing both the minimum and maximum fines; providing for imprisonment in cases of repeated violations; and by affording the remedy of injunction against the continuance of the operation of plants which are persistent offenders. I recommend, also, an increase in the number of inspectors, so that it shall be to detect violations of the act."

The reference here is to the law as sustained by the courts. That means an un-

tionably the law as the courts regard and construe it, and not as the health officer construes it. That being the case, the President asks for additional legislation increasing the maximum and minimum fines, providing for imprisonment in cases of repeated offending, and for the closing of persistently offending plants. The court has declared in specific terms that it does not recognize the difference between an instantaneous emission of dense smoke and one lasting over one minute. It will—under the terms of the President's projected legislation it would more heavily fine, imprison and enjoin—in any case brought before it in which it is established that the chimney has emitted the least quantity of dense black or gray smoke. All who have studied the matter without prejudice agree that this would be intolerable, that indeed it is impossible in the present state of the art to prevent the emission of smoke absolutely, and even the health officer, radical as he would seem to be in his administration of the law, confesses that Congress blundered in enacting the present law and attempts to correct this mistake by amending the statute by his own dictum. So if the President seriously wants to secure new legislation to make the old more effective, he should indicate whether he means the statute as enacted or the statute as already amended by the health officer. But the drastic enforcement of even the administratively amended statute, on a one-minute basis, would be an imposition upon the community, crippling its activities and congesting the courts and jails. There is no longer doubt of the need of an amendment to the law—this time by enactment of Congress and not by arbitrary dictum—to grant a longer period of permissible smoke emission, coupled with a limitation of the total of smoke emission during the twenty-four hours. Such an amendment will make for justice to the furnace owners and also for the ridance of the local skies of much of the smoke now in evidence. For as the case stands, even with the law modified by the health officer, it is possible for an offender to continue to belch forth great quantities of smoke and suffer no more in his punishment, if he happens to be caught, than the man whose chimney emits smoke for one minute and who also chances to be detected. The anti-smoke law should first be made clear, equitable and certain in its prohibitions, and should then be rigidly enforced, with severe punishments for its violation, if more drastic penalties are to be of any use. In that way alone can the end which all good citizens desire of a minimum of smoke in Washington be attained.

The Isle of Pines should realize that the United States some time ago found the supply of island dependencies greater than the demand for them.

Secretary Shaw cannot quite promise an elastic currency that will make a dollar bill stretch any further in meeting the demands of the beef trust.

Enough bills have already been introduced in Congress to make sure that the waste baskets and pigeon holes will not be vacant.

There is some preliminary anxiety as to whether the Panama canal is to have an altitudinous or a low-level salary list.

The czar promises reform, but has not gone so far as to take any notice of demands for municipal ownership.

SHOOTING STARS.

Distraction. "Have you quit reading about frenzied finance?"

"Yes," answered the reformer. "I'm tired of getting so indignant over what's past and gone that I forget to look out for the ingenious schemes they are laying for the future."

Paradoxical Bliss. The cynic is a curious elf. Complaint is his especial pride. He never can enjoy himself Except with his desatisfied.

"Revenge is sweet," said Uncle Eben, "but you mustn't forget to figure that it's just as sweet to do other feller as it is to you."

Corporation Revenues. "That company I am organizing will pay great dividends," said the hopeful inventor.

"Never mind about the dividends," answered Mr. Dustin Stax. "What will it do for us fellows who get in on the ground floor for salaries?"

Severity. "That man Grafton is always smiling and happy," remarked the observant man. "He can't have anything to trouble his conscience."

"No," answered Senator Sorghum. "It isn't that. He has no conscience to be troubled by anything."

Vanished Mirth. The brand new congressmen are here From distant rural climes. They somehow do not seem the same As those of former times. They speak just as the others did, With fervor, but alas! A good old-fashioned jest is gone. They don't blow out the gas.

Thus, one by one, traditions fade, With grief we see them go. Those dear companions true and tried, The jokes of long ago. Inventions new have brought this gloom Into our days and nights; They don't blow out the gas because We use electric lights.

The Evil of Party Prejudice. From the Indianapolis News.

If we are to read the shameful showing of political truthfulness aught we must not forget the reflection that after all it is based on the refusal of the average voter to put anything above party; his indurated sense that remains constantly proof against demonstrated rascality within the party and the nomination of bad men, the reply for him being simply that he prefers party regularity with rascality to independent reform. Analyzed this runs back to the base of the whole business, and that is that we shall never have reform until the average voter puts public interest above party interest and prefers purity and party success to the mere reputation of purity or democratic purity, but just plain purity.

Mark Twain's Philosophy.

From the New York World. Mark Twain is growing old gracefully. He has achieved the philosophy of life by keeping humor in it. Most philosophers fall off their high horses when they lack a proper sense of humor. Most humorists omit the philosophic contemplations which temper adversity. Most lives become rigid when the flexibility of youth departs. Mr. Clemens combines the lightness of youth with the experience of age.

Restriction. From the Chicago Record-Herald. The Emperor of Germany now owns eight high touring cars, but in spite of his versatility and his divine rights he can't scorch in more than one of them at a time.

And There's Christmas Coming. From the New York Herald.

Meats are going up, coal is to be higher and winter hats for womankind are to be more elaborate, and, of course, more costly.

Ciphers Might Solve It.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. If New York's 400 has shrunk to seventy-nine, how long will it take the city to set to become extinct? This sum cannot be worked by vulgar fractions.

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Scientific and practical tests prove the superior quality and absolute purity of “Ceres” Flour.

Made of selected wheat in the finest mills in the country, “Ceres” stands as the best flour in the market.

A barrel of “Ceres” Flour yields more bread and lighter, whiter, sweeter and more wholesome bread than any other flour in the market.

Your grocer will supply you with “Ceres” Flour. Refuse substitutes.

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